

**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES**  
**Division of Health Care Access and Accountability**  
**1 W. Wilson St.**  
**Madison WI 53703**

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To: FoodShare Wisconsin Handbook Users

From: Shawn Smith, Deputy Bureau Director  
Bureau of Enrollment Policy and Systems

Re: **FS Handbook Release 13-01**

Release Date: 3/14/2013

Effective Date: 3/14/2013

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

The following policy additions or changes are effective 3/14/2013, unless otherwise noted. **Yellow text denotes new text. Text with a strike through it in the old policy section denotes deleted text.**

**POLICY CLARIFICATIONS**

**1.1.4 Eligibility Overview**

**Non-Financial Eligibility**

The application process begins with a person contacting a local agency to request FoodShare benefits. ~~The local agency must determine if s/he is a resident of the county.~~ **The local agency must determine if the applicant is a resident of one of the counties within their consortia.** The local agency must ~~also~~ determine if s/he is a boarder, foster person, or resident of an institution. Some people are not eligible for FS because their food needs are already met.

**Shelter & Utilities**

Food units who pay shelter and utility costs may receive a shelter and utility deduction. The food group **will** receives a Standard Utility Allowance based on the ~~type(s) of utilities for which they are billed~~ **anticipation of the receipt of WHEAP benefits.** Unless the food unit includes an elderly or disabled individual, a shelter deduction is allowed only if the total shelter expense exceeds half the income after all other deductions.

**Review Date**

The local agency must review a FS group's eligibility within certain time frames. Most FS food units are certified for 12 months. Food units that include a migrant or seasonal farm worker and food units who are homeless are certified for 6 months. These food units are subject to reduced ~~change~~ reporting policy.

**1.2.1.2 Request for Verification**

**Note:** Allow FS to reopen at SMRF or recertification when closed for lack of verification or other reasons if the reason for case closure is fully resolved during the calendar month following case closure, as long as the SMRF is returned no later than ~~during the~~ **last day of the** 7th month or review interview was timely.

Allow FS to reopen when closed for lack of verification after a change is reported or discovered, as long the requested verification is provided in the calendar month following case closure.

In these situations benefits are prorated from the ~~time~~ **day** the HH completes **all** the required actions **needed to determine eligibility.**

**1.2.3.5 Wisconsin Residence** ~~Residence~~ **Residency** must be verified at the time of application and whenever an  
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## Residency Verification

individual states s/he resides in Wisconsin but his/her Wisconsin residency is determined questionable. **Do not require any specific type of verification.** See [1.2.6.1 Required Verification to Determine Eligibility](#).

**"Residency" refers to Wisconsin "residency" refers to residing in Wisconsin but not limited to any specific type of housing.**

- State residency is a required eligibility factor that **must can** be verified through a number of documents or a collateral contact.
- Acceptable verification of residency must not be limited to a single type of document and may be obtained from the applicant or other source.
- If the address on the application is not a fixed Wisconsin mailing address and there is no additional information presented at the time of the interview to verify that the household resides in Wisconsin, the worker should attempt to obtain verification of state residency.
- Workers should verify state residency for only if the information was not already verified for another program (e.g. BadgerCare Plus). In other words, don't over verify.
- Because Wisconsin is a state-wide project area, a move from one county to another within the state of Wisconsin does not make an individual's Wisconsin residency questionable.
- **Persons on vacation in Wisconsin are not residents of Wisconsin.**

**Example 3:** Susan is applying for FS and provided a Wisconsin street address, but failed to verify her shelter expenses. Since she works in Wisconsin and the address on her pay stub matches the address she provided, state residency is considered to be verified and is not questionable. Additional verification is not needed and because **the shelter expenses were not verified those expenses will not be used in the the shelter expenses were not questionable they will be allowed in the FS allotment calculation.**

### 1.2.4.5 Expense Verification

Verify those expenses that are required to be verified or those that are deemed questionable at application and or when a change in the expense is reported. At review ensure that there is up-to-date documentation in the file to support current CARES entries.

### 1.2.6.1 Required Verification to Determine Eligibility

<b>Monthly Gross Income</b>	<b>Earned Income</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dated Check stubs for the previous 30 days with the employee's name or ID number</li><li>• Earnings report or statement from employer</li><li>• IEVS report or computer match from another state – to be used only if no other form of verification exists</li></ul>
<b>Primary Person's ID</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Birth record query</li><li>• Birth certificate</li><li>• IEVS match</li><li>• <b>SSA (DXSQ/DXSN matches)</b></li><li>• Baptismal certificate</li></ul>

### 2.1.1 Initial certifications (applications)

Significant portions of this section have been updated. The text changes are too numerous to list.

Section 2.1.1.4.1 Verbal Requests for FoodShare Benefits has been renamed to Telephonic Signatures.

Section 2.1.1.4.4 Application Registrations At the Wrong Office within the Correct Agency has been removed. The information has been added to other sections.

## **2.1.2 Application Processing Timeframe**

The section has been separated into 2 subsections. Section 2.1.2.2 is new with this release.

### **2.1.2.1 Application Processing 30 Day Timeframe**

#### **2.1.2.2 Late Expedited Determinations**

A late determination of expedited benefits happens when an application is submitted as a non-Priority Service application, but found to be eligible for expedited benefits during the interview or at any other time during eligibility determination process. Once the agency is aware that the household is eligible for expedited benefits, benefits must be made available to the household within 7 calendar days from the date of discovery. The application is no longer considered a 30 day application, but an expedited eligible case and must be processed as such.

**Example:** An ACCESS application is submitted on January 18 and the information provided on the application indicates that applicant household does not qualify for priority service. The interview is scheduled and held on January 28. During the interview the worker determines that the applicant is eligible for expedited issuance. There could have been a change in the household's circumstances or the Priority Services screen could have been filled out incorrectly. The FS benefits must now be confirmed on or before February 4 to be considered timely. If the FS benefits are confirmed any later than February 4 they will be untimely. In this situation the worker does not have until February 18 to make a final determination as they originally had when this was a 30 day application.

## **2.1.3.1 Scheduling the Interview**

Local agencies must make every attempt to schedule interviews to ensure that an initial FS eligibility determination can be completed within the 30 day processing timeframe. ~~Applicants eligible for priority service must be scheduled for an interview the same day or the next business day following the filing date.~~ Priority Service interviews must be completed unless postponed (2.1.4) and benefits must be issued no later than the 7th calendar day following the file date.

~~Interviews are typically held at the local office, but may be held at a mutually acceptable location including the food unit's residence.~~ FoodShare applicants have the right to complete a face-to-face (FTF) or phone interview (2.1.3.5). If an applicant requests an FTF interview, the interview is typically held at the local office but may be held at a mutually acceptable location including the food unit's residence. If an interview is scheduled at a residence, it must be scheduled in advance. ~~In many circumstances, a telephone interview (2.1.3.5) may be scheduled.~~

Agencies are required to schedule and provide written notice of an interview for an initial FoodShare application. Notice of the application interview must be in writing and mailed to the household unless the notice cannot be received by the applicant prior to the date of the interview. Verbal notification of the interview is only allowable if an interview letter cannot be received prior to the interview and only if the agency provides this information directly to a responsible adult household member. If verbal notice is provided the agency must document in case comments that a verbal notice was provided, the name of the person that received the verbal notice, the date and time of the interview and whether the interview would be conducted by telephone or face to face. If the applicant is physically present when the appointment is scheduled, the agency must provide the applicant a print out of the written notice. Notice Of Missed Interview (NOMI) requirements must be met if the applicant misses the interview.

Local agencies must notify each household that misses their initial application

interview or review appointment that they missed the scheduled interview and that the household is responsible for rescheduling a missed interview. The use of Client Scheduling in CARES will ensure that households receive this notice. See [Process Help 1.8.9.7](#) for details on the Automated NOMI process. If Client Scheduling is not used, notices of missed interview appointments and client responsibility to reschedule must be issued by the local agency. A copy of the agency notice must be scanned to the ECF. Agencies may not deny a household's application prior to the 30th day after the application filing date if the household fails to appear for the first interview.

For households that miss a scheduled appointment and contact the agency to re-schedule within the 30-day application processing period ([2.1.2](#)), the agency must schedule another interview.

~~FoodShare applicants have the right to a face to face interview. The ESC will schedule telephone interviews for all applications. However, if a childless adult requests an in person interview, the ESC will make arrangements with the local agency to conduct it.~~

#### **2.1.3.2 Completing the Interview**

Replaced terminology "ESS" (Economic Support Specialist) with "agency." Fixed typos.

#### **2.1.3.3 Use of an Authorized Representative**

A non-food unit member may be designated as an authorized representative for the food unit provided that the person is:

1. An adult who is sufficiently aware of relevant food unit circumstances, and
2. The authorized representative designation has been made in writing by the primary person, spouse, or another responsible member of the food unit.

The Authorized representative designation may be made in ACCESS or by completing the form [F-10126](#).

Individuals who are disqualified for an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) (3.14.1) cannot serve as authorized representatives during the disqualification period, unless the agency has determined that no one else is available to serve as an authorized representative.

Residents of drug and alcohol treatment centers must apply and be certified for FS eligibility through the use of an authorized representative.

When an authorized representative applies on behalf of a household, the identity of both the authorized representative and the head of the household must be verified.

#### **2.1.3.4 Signature**

The FoodShare applicant must provide a telephonic signature, an electronic signature on an ACCESS RFA or application or sign the completed CARES generated Application Summary or FoodShare Wisconsin Application ([F-1609A](#) or [F-16019B](#)) or 6 month report form indicating that all the information provided is true and complete and that they understand their rights and responsibilities. A signature is required when a 6 month report form is submitted. A telephonic signature is not allowable for 6 month report forms.

It is not necessary for an applicant's written signatures to be witnessed by an agency representative for a FS application or review to be considered complete. A FS applicant or recipient's telephonic signature is recorded by the agency and stored in the electronic case file.

**Example 1:** Eve applies and sets the filing date for FS. Jule, Eve's roommate, who is also an adult, completes the intake interview and signs the Application Summary Case Summary signature page. The FS application is valid without Eve's signature on the CAF Combined Application Form Case Summary signature page because Jule is a responsible adult AG household member.

### 2.1.3.5 Telephone Interviews

Households who request a Face-To-Face (FTF) interview must be granted one.

Local agencies should waive the face to face (FTF) interview requirement in favor of a telephone **be conducting most of their interviews by telephone unless the household requests a FTF interview.**

While a hardship reason is no longer required to allow a telephone interview, the following hardship reasons (if applicable) should be collected and documented at the time of application:

- a) ~~the client is elderly or disabled,~~
- b) ~~illness,~~
- c) ~~severe weather,~~
- d) ~~transportation difficulties,~~
- e) ~~conflict with work, training or school hours,~~
- f) ~~childcare issues,~~
- g) ~~caring for a HH member,~~
- h) ~~confidentiality concerns,~~
- i) ~~stigma from an office visit would deter HH from applying for benefits, or~~
- j) ~~other hardship situation.~~

Keep in mind:

- ~~Even if a household has an authorized representative, FTF interviews may be waived and a telephone interview conducted.~~
- ~~Workers should not question hardship statements.~~
- ~~When a FTF interview is waived, a telephone interview must be completed. This includes priority service applications.~~
- ~~Telephone interviews do not exempt the household from verification requirements (1.2.1 Verification Introduction).~~
- ~~Waiving the FTF interview does not exempt the household from signature requirements.~~
- ~~A filing date must be set prior to conducting a telephone interview for applications. See 2.1.1.4 Setting the Filing Date.~~
- ~~Waiving the FTF interview does not affect the length of the certification period.~~

**Telephone interviews do not exempt the household from verification requirements (1.2.1 Verification introduction).**

### 2.1.3.6 Completing Telephone Interviews

A filing date must be set prior to conducting a telephone interview for all new FS applicants. **The interview can be completed if a telephonic signature is collected at the time the interview is completed.** See [2.1.1.4 Setting the Filing Date](#).

At the start of the telephone interview, make a verbal agreement with the client that s/he will complete the application or recertification (2.2.1) interview over the phone. Document the agreement in case comments. ~~and include the hardship reason for the telephone interview.~~

Go over the application with the client using the intake or review driver flows in the CARES system. Access the data exchange information ~~for the case in CARES~~ and act on any information that you find. If there are discrepancies in the information, resolve those differences during the interview and/or verification process. At the end of the interview, advise the client about EBT training available through your local agency.

### 2.1.3.7 Post Telephone Interview Process

After the interview, if verification is needed, ~~print~~ **mail** out a verification **checklist** and send it to the client with instructions to provide the listed documents ~~to the FS worker~~ within 10 **calendar** days or by the end of the application or review processing period,

whichever is later.

If the food unit claims deductible expenses during the interview, the food unit must verify certain claimed deductions or the deduction will not be allowed (See [1.2.4.5 Expense Verification](#)). If verification of the deductions is not provided, do not allow the deduction and do not close the case.

#### **Applications**

At the end of the telephone interview, the application review and/or SMRF must be signed by the client to be considered complete. If a valid signature has been collected (See 2.1.3.4 Signature) for the current interview, you do not need to collect an additional signature and the case summary or CAF must be provided to the applicant/member. If a change is reported during the interview the case summary/CAF must be sent to the client to review, make corrections if any, sign and return to the agency. the agency must record the telephonic signature if they do not already have a written or electronic signature and then generate a copy of the Case Summary to be mailed to the household. The applicant must review the Case Summary and notify the agency within 10 calendar days if corrections are needed.

#### **Reviews**

If there is not a signature for the current interview, instruct the client that you will be mailing the printed Application Summary Case Summary to them for their signature. At the end of the review interview, collect a telephonic signature. If the household refuses to provide a telephonic signature, instruct the member that you will be mailing the printed Application Summary Case Summary to them for their signature. The Application Summary Case Summary should be reviewed for correctness, signed and returned to the agency within 10 calendar days or by the end of the application or by the end of the review processing period, whichever is later. The application or review is not complete until the signed Application Summary Case Summary signature page is returned to the agency.

If the signed Application Summary Case Summary is not returned within the ten day period, or by the end of the application or review processing period, whichever is later, close the case for failure to sign the application (closure code 045).

#### **2.1.4.4 Postponing The Interview For Expedited Benefits**

Households that meet criteria for expedited benefit through a CWW priority service screening eligibility determination may be allowed to postpone their interview under certain circumstances.

Postponement of the interview prior to benefit issuance only applies when:

1. There is sufficient information to determine household composition and income.
2. A household meets criteria for expedited benefits as determined by CWW priority service screening; and
3. The agency has made 2 attempts, but was unable to contact the household to complete the interview, or
4. The agency determines that the interview cannot be scheduled in time to complete the expedited issuance process timely because the household did not provide a phone number and the agency is not able to obtain a phone number using other sources such as a phone book or previous case; and
5. Identity of the applicant can be verified.

Postponement of the interview only applies to the above households at application and not at time of review. Postponing the application interview for expedited benefits does not exempt the household from the interview and verification requirements for ongoing FS benefits. The agency may treat the interview like other required verification and postpone it during the month of application. Once expedited benefits have been issued, a decision for ongoing benefits must be completed within the original 30 days from the filing date.



### 3.14.1.2 IPV Disqualification for Receipt of Multiple FS Benefits

A person who makes a false or misleading statement, or misinterprets, conceals or withholds facts including but not limited to identity or place of residence in order to receive multiple FS benefits simultaneously shall be ineligible for a period of 10 years.

Before imposing the 10 year disqualification period:

- A finding of fraud must be made by a state agency, or
- A conviction of fraud must be entered by a state or federal court.
- 3. ~~The disqualification period must be ordered by a state or federal court.~~

~~Do not use an The Administrative Disqualification Hearing decision, or a Pre-Trial Diversion Agreement as a basis (ADH) process, including the offer to sign the ADH waiver, F-16039, may be used for imposing this penalty. If the IPV determination is not made according to the above conditions, the disqualification period must comply with the terms specified in 3.14.1.1.~~

### 3.20.1 QC Sanctions

Food Units with a state QC review sanction are sanctioned in the next possible payment month through the end of the annual quality control review period (September 30), plus another 95 125 days or until the unit member(s) cooperate, whichever occurs first.

Food Units with a federal QC review sanction are sanctioned in the next possible payment month through the end of the annual quality review period (September 30) plus another 7 months, or until the food unit member(s) cooperate.

**Example 1:** Susan's FS case is sampled for a QC review of 6/08 10/12 FS benefits. State QC reports to the agency that Susan refuses to cooperate with the State QC review. Susan's food unit is ineligible until 01/04/09 02/02/14, or until she cooperates with the State QC review, whichever occurs first.

### 4.7.4.1 Student Income

Do not deem any of the ineligible student's income to the food group. ~~If s/he actually contributes a portion to the FS group, count it as income to the FS group.~~ Cash payments from the ineligible student to any of the eligible household members will be counted as income to the FS group if those payments are regular and predictable.

**Example 1:** A food unit of 4 includes a FS group of 3 children and 1 parent who is an ineligible student. The parent is the only person in the food unit who has income and does not give a cash payment to the 3 children. None of the parent's income would be counted for the FS group.

**Example 2:** A food unit of 3 includes a FS group of 2 and 1 ineligible student. The ineligible student has an income of \$800/month. The ineligible student pays one of the FS group members \$50 every month for the use of the member's car. The \$50/month is counted as unearned income for the member who receives this money. The remaining \$750/month of the ineligible student's income is not counted as income for the FS group.

### 4.7.5.1 Pro-rated Income

If the ineligible individual has earned income:

1. Determine his/her total nonexempt earned income.
2. ~~Deduct 20 percent of the total in 1.~~
3. ~~Do steps 2, 3, & 4 (above). Enter the result on line 8 of the FS worksheet. Deem the earned income of a non-FS group member as unearned income to the FS group.~~
2. Add the number of members in the FS group to the number of ineligible persons in the food unit.
3. Divide the amount of income in step #1 by the total in step #2. This will be the amount of income allotted to each person in the food unit.

4. Multiple the result from step #3 by the number of FS group members. In order to deem the income to the FS group, this amount must be entered into the earned income page under the ineligible person who earned it.
5. CARES will allow the 20% earned income deduction.
6. CARES will then deem the appropriate income to the eligible household members as unearned income (shown on FS budget).

**Example 2:** A food unit of 4 includes a FS group of 2 eligible members and 1 person who is an ineligible immigrant, and 1 who is an ineligible student. The ineligible immigrant has gross monthly earned income of \$734.98.

Step 1: Gross income = \$734.98.

Step 2: eligible members = 2 + 2 ineligible members = 4 total FS unit.

Step 3 & 4:  $\$734.98/4 = \$183.74 \times 3 = \$551.23$  (enter this amount on earned income page).

Step 5: CWW will allow the 20% earned income deduction  $\$551.23 \times .20 = \$110.24$  (see budget page).

Step 6: CWW will deem  $\$551.23 - \$110.24 = \$440.98$  (budgetable income) to the 2 eligible members as unearned income (see budget).

#### **6.2.1.2 Processing Requests for FS Cases Closed Less Than A Calendar Month**

If a FoodShare case assigned to the local agency has been closed for less than a calendar month, the local agency is responsible for processing the request for FoodShare benefits by either applying the break in service policy or by allowing the individual to complete a new application. ~~These individuals should not be referred to the ESC. The case remains with the county until the member either applies for the Core Plan or instructions have been given to start the transfer of existing FoodShare cases to the ESC.~~